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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal One, we adore You. You have been the great companion and teacher of humanity, lifting us from the depths and permitting us to share in Your glory.

Today, fill our lawmakers with greater trust in You. May that trust bring them to a wholehearted surrender to Your will. Lord, help them to see in every sorrow and joy the stately footprints of Your loving providence, enabling them to say to the mountains of difficulties, "Be removed." Renew the strength of our Senators so that they will mount up with wings like eagles. Remind them that security and esteem come not from titles, positions, or power but from being Your servants, working for Your glory and the good of humankind.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 3, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BURRIS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I assume the majority leader will be here momentarily. I have a brief statement. I think I will go ahead and make that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may proceed.

WELCOMING GERMAN CHANCELLOR MERKEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we will all have an opportunity to hear German Chancellor Merkel speak to a joint session of Congress later this morning.

We welcome her to the Capitol. It is always an honor for us to welcome a head of state to this great symbol of democracy in which we all have the privilege to work.

We look forward to hearing Chancellor Merkel's words, and we wish her a very pleasant and productive stay in Washington.

HEALTH CARE: HIGHER PREMIUMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Americans have always had a healthy skepticism about government. But the health care bill that Democrats in Congress have put together this year would

surprise even the wariest of citizens about government's potential to misread its mandate.

At a time of near 10-percent unemployment and a staggering \$12 trillion Federal debt, this bill proposes to spend at least another trillion dollars to extend the reach of government in the health care decisions of every single American.

What's worse, a bill that was meant to control costs is expected to increase them. One independent study after another has shown that the bills we have seen wouldn't make health insurance premiums go down, they would actually drive them up.

You would think this would be enough to send the bill writers back to the drawing board. After all, the primary argument that was used to marshal support for these bills was the unsustainable cost of health care. Unfortunately, it hasn't. Frankly, it is an absurd spot in which we now find ourselves.

For months and months, we heard that certain reforms were needed to drive down costs. Yet now, after analysts have concluded that these proposals would actually increase costs, the people who were arguing for them are trying harder than ever to get these proposals approved, as quickly as possible.

The irreducible fact is this: while Americans have been saying we need more affordable health care, the Democrat plan makes it more expensive—and that is not reform.

We have the testimony of the Joint Committee on Taxation, the Congressional Budget Office, the administration's own Office of the Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and separate analyses by many others that say so. Each has said that the proposals we have seen would lead to higher premiums. And these higher premiums would especially hit the young, the healthy, and small businesses owners.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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